

Reminiscences

Through the Looking Glass

(The late Henry Cragin Walker wrote some fascinating articles for the **Duxbury Clipper**. Here is a sample. -- Ed.)

Have you ever visited Duxbury Beach during or after a great northeast storm on a winter's day? The breakers as far as one can see are a smother of white

foam, and they burst upon the beach as though anxious to wash it away; their thunder is so loud one has to shout to be heard.

Great stretches to kelp strew the beach, and among them are broken lobster traps mingled with gaily painted buoys. One winter I collected enough rope to last a

I always hoped I would find a lump of ambergris, or a female figurehead that had once adorned an ancient ship, torn from its ocean bed.

But be careful about going too near the surf, for every little while a monster wave, towering over its fellows, may engulf you.

So far as I know, there have been no great wrecks for many years; ships keep far away from the treacherous Duxbury sands.

Twice each night a coast guard walks from the Gurnet to the bridge; a cold and lonely vigil in the winter.

A Fearsome Tale

A coast guard once told me a fearsome tale: He was walking on the beach at night during a terrific gale. Suddenly, hearing a long whistling wail, he turned and saw what looked like a great sea animal rushing towards him. He ran for his life, then tripped and fell. The monster sped past him, still shrieking like a demon. The coast guard shut his eyes and prayed; when he opened them he saw that the 'demon' was a huge cask; one head of it had been smashed, and the powerful wind, entering the top, whistled out through the bunghole, making the terrifying sound.

Oldsters may remember Barney Williamson, who owned a commodious duck-blind half way between the bridge and Gurnet light. I have often stayed there over night. Barney was a famous cook who owned a shaggy Irish Water Spaniel, and often, when a goose or duck had been wounded and was swimming about perhaps 50 yards from shore, Barney would stand at the water's edge and direct the dog. The spaniel would occasionally lose sight of his prey, and rising on a high

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LOOKING GLASS (Continued from Page 21)

sportsmen would give a shout, the geese would rise and a fusillade of shots usually killed or wounded almost half of them.

Barney Williamson has long since gone to the Happy Hunting Grounds. I hope he has luck, and meets his old friend, the dog.